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TO THE TEACHER



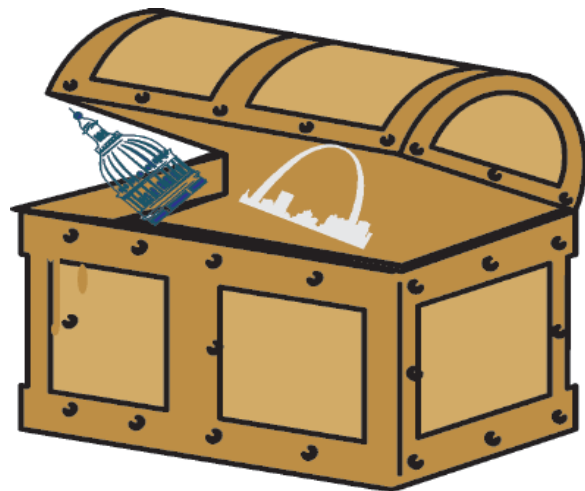
EXPERIENCEYOURAMERICA

The National Park Service's mission is to *“conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”* 16 U.S.C. (1)

National Parks are exciting places to explore our country's great beauty and to learn the rich lessons of our past. When we talk about the West, many colorful images come to mind. But do you know about working on a steamboat? If you could travel back in time, would you want to ride the untamed western rivers?

We at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial are dedicated to sharing these exciting pages of America's westward expansion movement with everyone. This traveling trunk provides a mini-museum for those who are unable to visit the Museum of Westward Expansion and the Old Courthouse. It has hands-on objects, mounted photographs, video and audiotapes, clothing, and books. You will also find a laminated contents sheet in your information folder. It will help you identify the artifacts in the trunk. To prepare your students, use the Pre-Trunk Activity you received with your invoice. We also suggest you use the two Post-Trunk Activities after you finish the trunk. Classroom activities in this handbook are labeled in red. You can choose those that meet your students' needs.

The National Park Service is dedicated to protecting our national parks and our resources. Please help us by protecting the resources in this traveling trunk.





The following tested objectives for the states of Missouri and Illinois, as well as National Standards for History and Social Studies, are addressed in this trunk and guide.

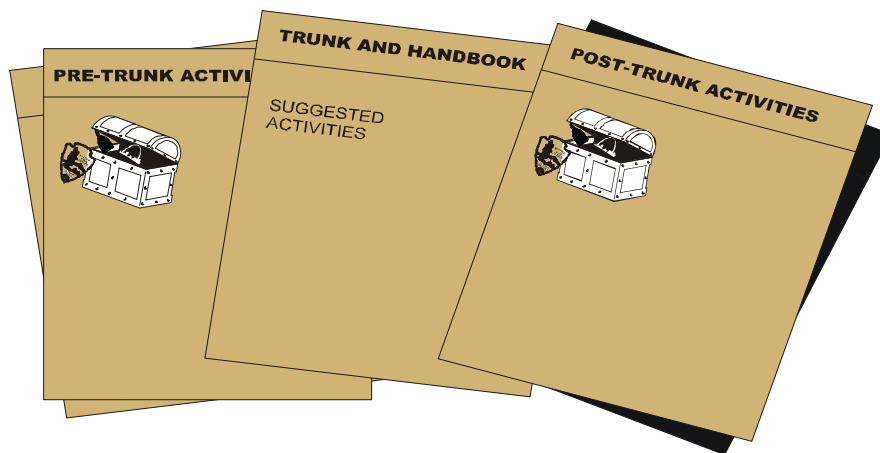
- ◆ Communicate effectively and work with others. (ILS 4; MAP 2.3, 4.6; NCSS IVh)
- ◆ Compare and contrast features of everyday life today with those of the past. (ILS 16.A, 16.D; MAP 1.9; NCSS IIb; NSH 1A)
- ◆ Construct and interpret timelines. (ILS 16.A; MAP 1.8; NCSS IIb; NSH 1E, 1F)
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of chronological development and interrelationships of events. (ILS 16.A, 16.B; MAP 1.6; NCSS IIb; NSH 1)
- ◆ Describe and compare major beliefs, values, and attitudes of various cultures. (ILS 16.D; MAP 1.9; NCSS Ia; NSH 3B)
- ◆ Explore career opportunities. (ILS 18.B; MAP 4.8; NCSS Vg)
- ◆ Identify key individuals in the development of significant historical or political events. (ILS 16.B; NCSS IV; NSH 5A)
- ◆ Organize information to plan and make presentations. (ILS 5; MAP 1.8, 2.1)
- ◆ Read and interpret written works and quotations about the past. (ILS 2.B & 16.A; MAP 1.5; NCSS IIc; NSH 2, 3)

ILS: Illinois Learning Standards

MAP: Missouri Assessment Program

NCSS: National Council for the Social Studies

NSH: National Standards for History





LETTER FROM HENRY BLOSSOM



Did You Know?
Robert Fulton launched the first successful steamboat in 1807. The *Clermont* went from New York City up the Hudson River to Albany. It took 33 hours to make the 150-mile trip.

The Mississippi and Missouri rivers had been the major highways of the native inhabitants of the Midwest for centuries. The traditional use of rivers for transportation continued as early explorers and fur trappers traveled through the area using pirogues (dugout canoes), flatboats, and keelboats. The first steamboat to enter the Mississippi was the *New Orleans*. In 1811 the boat traveled from Pittsburgh via the Ohio River to the port of New Orleans. The natives along the river thought it was some kind of monster belching black smoke. In 1817, the *Pike* was the first steamboat to reach St. Louis, and within two years steamboat arrivals and departures became routine.

Steamboats were a part of the American scene from the 1820s until the early 1900s. During the mid-nineteenth century America's fascination with steamboating was at its peak. The levees and landings were overflowing with people, animals and cargo of every kind. This was the age of Mark Twain and Tom Sawyer. It was a golden age which faded away amidst an encroaching war and against the competition of an ever-expanding railroad.

This trunk is based on the life of Henry M. Blossom. In 1852 he came to St. Louis from New York and took a job as a "mud clerk" aboard the Missouri River steamboat *Polar Star*. In six years he went from "mud clerk" to chief clerk to part owner of the boat. In 1860 he left his life on the river for various reasons and ventured into the insurance business, where he became a very successful businessman in St. Louis and New York.

Divide your class into small groups and give each group one of the items from the trunk. Ask students to work together to analyze the items and their use. Then have students take turns reading the following story to the class. When a group thinks they have one of the items mentioned, have a representative from the group stand up, show the item and pass it around. Please return all items to the trunk after everyone has had a chance to see and touch them.

Dear Grandchildren,

I am leaving you this trunk of personal belongings so that you might remember me. Most folks think of me as a business man, but much of what I am today I owe to my time spent on the river. It was there that I grew from an awkward teenager into a responsible adult. It was there that I learned about people and places. It was there that I learned about life. I am leaving my possessions and my story with you so that you can share them with your grandchildren.



(Use this photo from the trunk.)

*I have not always lived in the great city of St. Louis. I headed west in 1852, having been born and raised in New York. I've enclosed a **photo of the St. Louis riverfront taken around 1840**. A friend of mine working on the river at that time sent it to me. I was 19 years old when I first arrived in the colorful river city. I secured a job as second clerk on the **Polar Star**, one of the finest steamboats on the Missouri River, while my older brother Dwight served as chief clerk. The **Polar Star** was also known as a packet boat because it carried both freight and passengers.*

*As second clerk I was more commonly referred to as the "mud clerk," and rightly so. On many occasions I waded through ankle deep mud on unpaved levees, receiving and discharging freight and making sure everything agreed with the bills of lading. I've included several **bills of lading** and my **ledger book** in the trunk. You can see the great variety of items we carried aboard the boat. My other duties included assisting the chief clerk with his responsibilities, issuing passenger tickets and collecting fares, showing people around the boat, ordering and purchasing supplies, and handling the crew's wages. Above all, we were expected to minister to the needs and comforts of the passengers. The reputation of the boat depended heavily upon the service of the crew.*

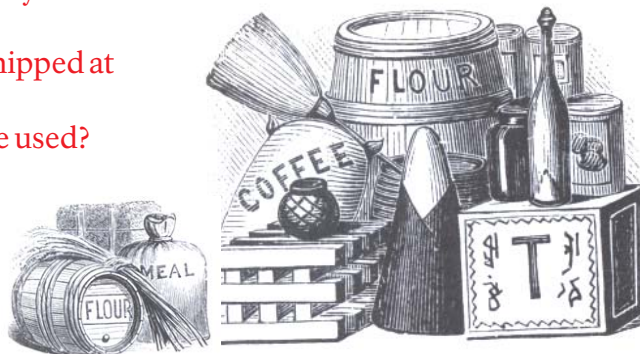


*After Dwight resigned as chief clerk, it was only natural that I would step into that position. I served as chief clerk for six years and learned much about the steamboat business. Eventually I became part owner of the **Polar Star**.*

Classroom Activity #1

Bills of lading allowed the clerk to keep track of the goods that were transported on the steamer. Divide your students into 5 small groups. Give each group a bill of lading. Have them find the date of the bill of lading, what was shipped and what was charged. Then have each group address the following questions:

- What was happening in the country during the year appearing on your bill of lading?
- Why were the items being shipped at this time so significant?
- How do you think they were used?

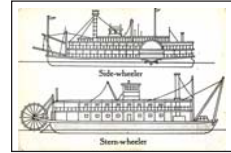


Did You Know?

The real **Polar Star** was built in 1852 and was in service until 1865. In 1853 she set the record for running time between St. Louis and St. Joseph, Missouri. For this honor, she was the holder of a set of polished deer antlers until 1855, when the **James H. Lucas** beat her time.



*The Polar Star was a grand boat. It was a sternwheeler, meaning it had only one paddlewheel in the back of the boat. Sternwheelers were designed to travel the narrow, shallow Missouri and upper Mississippi Rivers. Sidewheelers had a paddlewheel on each side of the boat and were better suited for the deep wide areas of the lower Mississippi, between St. Louis and New Orleans. I've included a **sketch of both kinds of boats**. Besides the placement of the paddle wheels, most steamboats were similar in design. The first or main deck was used to store the freight and served as the sleeping quarters for the rousters and firemen. It had a designated area for travelers who could not afford the price of a regular fare. It also housed the furnaces, engines and boilers. The second floor was called the boiler deck because it sat above the boiler. In the center of this deck was the grand saloon, the large social and dining area for the well-to-do passengers. The grand saloon glittered with mirrors and chandeliers and from its walls hung beautiful oil paintings. Surrounding this area was a ring of private state rooms for the passengers. Each stateroom had a door which opened into the grand saloon and another which opened to the promenade outside and around the boat. As the clerk, my office was located at the front of this deck. Above the boiler deck was the hurricane deck, so named because this large open observation deck was the windiest part of the boat. On top sat the Texas deck. It was known by that name because it was an addition to steamboat design much like we added Texas to the Union back in 1845. That is where the officers had their rooms. The pilot house topped off the boat. From there the pilots had a commanding view of the river.*



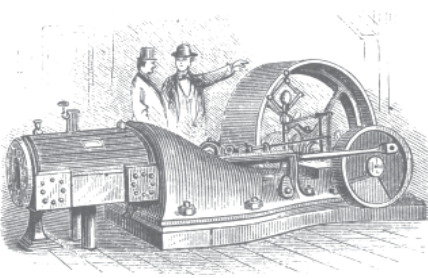
(Use this photo from the trunk.)



Did You Know?
Hidden underwater obstacles, fires and boiler explosions reduced the average life of a steamboat to only five years.

Classroom Activity #2

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution was well under way in Europe and in America. Power driven machinery, factories, and mass production characterized the industrial revolution. The nineteenth century steamboat was also a product of this early technological progress. While many people benefited from industrialization, it also had a dark side. Have students investigate American culture during this time period. Discuss how it changed for the better and how it changed for the worse. Plan to have a classroom debate on the issue.

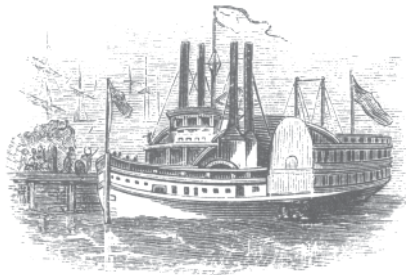


Did You Know?

The pilot house had glass on only three sides. The front window was left open so nothing would interfere with the pilot's view.

Of course the most recognizable feature of the steamboat was its outside decoration. With its ornamental trim, fancy railings, and elegant arches, many thought of it as the most beautiful of all structures. It is not surprising they coined the phrase, “elegant as a steamboat.” There were those that thought the beautiful, three-tiered, white structure even resembled a “floating wedding cake.”

I’ve included a piece of **gingerbread trim** from the *Polar Star*. Each steamer company had its own distinctive pattern. Another form of gingerbread used was the finial. The finials on the *Polar Star* were shaped like a **wooden acorn** and were used atop the upright posts. They not only added a bright touch but protected the post from weather damage. The shape of the acorn allowed water to run off the sides and not seep into the post.



Did You Know?



The tall smoke stacks on a steamboat were not just for decoration. They were designed to be tall so that any flying embers exited the stacks far enough away from the wooden structure and cargo to avoid disaster from fires.

Classroom Activity #3

The height of the steamboat era came during the Victorian Age. The period gets its name from the English queen, Victoria, who was crowned in 1837 at the age of eighteen, and died in 1901. During this time art, music, literature and architecture flourished. Out of the Victorian Era several different types of architecture were born. The ornate steamboats that first appeared in the 1830s are generally considered to be the first style of the Victorian Era, *Gothic Revival*, 1830-1860. The other Victorian styles were as follows:

- Italianate* 1840-1880
- Romanesque* 1840-1900
- Second Empire (Mansard)* 1860-1890
- Queen Anne* 1880-1900

Divide your class into five groups. Assign each group one of the styles above. Have them research their topic and answer the following questions: How do you think the style got its name? What else was happening in the United States and the world, during this time? Can you find an example of this type of architecture in your community?



Did You Know?

The people living in river towns were so influenced by the steamboat’s architecture that many constructed their porches to look like a steamboat deck. Steamboat builders and carpenters were often hired to create many of the beautiful river mansions. Many retiring captains fashioned their homes after steamboats even if they lived far from the river.



*I worked with many a good crew during my years on the river. Our crews numbered anywhere from 40 to 80 men depending on the amount of freight and number of passengers. Many of the rivermen I will remember, but one in particular stands out in my memory, Joseph Murphy. He was a deckhand on the **Polar Star**. He and his family immigrated from Ireland in 1851 after several years of failed crops. St. Louis was going to be a new start for them.*

Deckhands and rousters, men hired by the boat at each port to help load and unload freight, had no easy job. Loading and unloading freight was backbreaking work and could happen any time of the day or night. Nevertheless, Murphy always had a smile on his face and a song in his heart. When it was time to stop for wood, usually twice a day, at one of the many wood yards along the river, passengers would line the railing to watch the spectacle. It was not uncommon for an exciting physical contest to break out between the rousters and deckhands to determine who could carry the most wood. Murphy was always a favorite. He could carry twice as much wood as anyone else. Murphy felt fortunate to be a deckhand instead of a fireman. A steamboat fireman stood hour upon hour feeding the giant furnaces with wood until the boilers literally swelled with steam. The fire burned so bright that a man could go blind peering into the glowing embers. Before the great war between the states, many firemen were slaves hired out by their masters.



Did You Know? Slavery above the Mason-Dixon line was very different from what it was in the South. Slave owners in St. Louis often hired their slaves out for odd jobs around town. The slave owner was then entitled to the money earned by his slave.

Classroom Activity #4

The nineteenth century was a time of sweeping change. As technology moved ahead, many countries in Europe were experiencing economic, political and social unrest. People were fleeing their homelands in search of better lives and America became their haven. Irish, Germans, and Italians were the three largest cultural groups to immigrate to the United States during the nineteenth century. Divide your students into three groups and assign each group one of the immigrant groups. Have students use the Internet to investigate why the immigrants left their homeland and what their life was like in this country.



Deckhands were always on call to perform a variety of odd jobs aboard the boat. A deckhand was usually called upon to take the river readings or soundings as they were called on the river.

Soundings were taken at the discretion of the pilot, when making a river crossing, going through unfamiliar areas, or whenever there was doubt about the depth of the water. When a pilot "called for the lead," he gave a signal with either the whistle or bell. One signal meant to report to the starboard side (right side), two signals meant to the port side (left side). I've included one of our



lead lines. The leadman would throw the weighted end overboard and use the leather markings to estimate the depth of the water. Each piece of leather marked one fathom or six feet. Once the depth hit twelve feet or two fathoms, the leadman shouted to the watch on the hurricane deck the words "mark twain," and the watch in turn shouted it to the pilot. "Mark twain" meant the water was deep enough for safe passage. Samuel Clemens, the writer, has made his pen name so popular, nobody remembers it as an old riverman's term.

Classroom Activity #5

"Ma-a-a-rk twain" was such a common sound on the river that Samuel Clemens never forgot it. In 1863 he adopted it as his penname. The words remained important to the rivermen, long after Clemens personalized it. "Mark twain" were not the only words chanted by the leadman. Have students use the clues below to determine some other common river readings. Answers are on page 24 in the Appendix.

mark one = 6 feet

quarter twain = 13 1/2 feet

mark twain = 12 feet

No bottom = over 24 feet

half twain

mark twain

half three

quarter less three

quarter three

quarter less four

mark four



(Use this photo from the trunk.)

Classroom Activity #6

A run between St. Louis and St. Joseph, Missouri or between St. Louis and New Orleans took the steamboat to a variety of wharves and landings to pick up passengers and cargo. Locate the following two photos in the trunk and compare and contrast the two images.



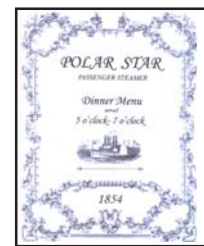
(Use this photo from the trunk.)



The boat also employed porters, chambermaids, cooks, a carpenter, a bar keeper, and a barber. In the trunk you'll find one of the shaving mugs and brushes from the barbershop aboard the *Polar Star*.



The officers of the boat consisted of the captain, the chief clerk, two pilots, a steward, two engineers, and a mate. The mud clerk, the cub pilot, and the striker, who was an engineer in training, were considered junior officers. The captain was ultimately in charge of the boat. Sometimes the captain was hired by the boat's owner to manage the vessel. Other times the owner himself would serve as captain. He decided which run the boat would make and when it would leave, he arranged contracts, and did all he could to provide for the safety and satisfaction of his passengers. The pilots were responsible for navigating the boat. Many a pilot made the job look simple, but steering around sandbars, snags and sawyers and keeping the boat in the ever-changing channel (the deepest part of the waterway) was quite a challenge. The steward was in charge of the kitchen and its staff. Most stewards did not receive the recognition due them considering they managed the preparation and presentation of three, sometimes four meals, a day for as many as 300 passengers. I've included a copy of the menu from the *Polar Star*. You can see for yourself why mealtime was so popular. The engineer oversaw the engine room and its staff, making sure that the engines and boilers were in top working condition. The mate served under the captain and directed the work of the rousters and deckhands.



Did You Know?

Mark Twain received his pilot license at the St. Louis Courthouse (Old Courthouse) in 1858. As a riverman he was not very well known. He only piloted five years and never had more than a second class license.

Classroom Activity #7

Make copies of the Polar Star menu to pass out to students. Discuss the foods listed. Then divide your class into multiple groups and assign each one of the food categories on the menu. Have them discover what some of the more unusual dishes are.

Not everyone in the nineteenth century had the opportunity to eat out like we do today. Except for very special occasions, meals were made and eaten at home. Ask students to think of a favorite home-cooked meal. Encourage each one to bring in a family recipe and compile a class recipe book.



What I enjoyed most about my time on the river was meeting such a wide variety of people. Many easterners and immigrants traveled the **Polar Star** from St. Louis to Independence on their way to begin a westward journey on the Oregon Trail. At Independence, we would pick up fur traders eager to bring their business back to St. Louis. I've included a piece of **buffalo fur**. Often our loads would include thousands and thousands of pounds of buffalo fur, which were used to make fancy lap robes for the easterners. During the winter months when the Missouri was blocked by ice, we would sometimes run the lower Mississippi. We would sail down to the sunny South and pick up wealthy plantation owners traveling North with their crops. As you can see from the **picture**, transporting cotton was a big business.



(Use this photo from the trunk.)

Those who could afford a regular fare were called cabin passengers and had the pleasure of staying in the staterooms. The rooms were small but offered all the comforts of the grandest of hotels. For the ladies and gentlemen, bathhouses were located at either end of the grand saloon. As you can see from the **pillow case**, everything was done in good taste. Staterooms were in high demand. When there was an overflow of passengers, the staterooms usually went to the ladies, and the gentlemen would make due with a mattress and a blanket on the floor of the grand saloon.



Once aboard a steamboat, most passengers found the days to be long. To pass the time, they socialized on deck and in the grand saloon, where they ate three or more meals a day. Another important pastime was reading. One of the most popular books of the day was **Uncle Tom's Cabin** by Harriet Beecher Stowe. I even found myself discussing the book with passengers regarding the topics addressed in that book.

Classroom Activity #8

Harriet Beecher Stowe had long been appalled by the institution of slavery. Her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852, humanized slavery by telling the story of individuals and families. The book brought the horrors of slavery to the attention of American society and thus contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War. Locate the quote on page 24 in the Appendix. Share it with the students. Use the following questions to stimulate a class discussion.

- What were the North's reasons for wanting to end slavery?
- What would happen to the South if and when slavery was abolished?
- How did the abolition of slavery add a new set of problems to the lives of African-Americans?





Deck passengers were usually impoverished Americans or immigrants that could not afford to pay the price of a cabin fare. Their half price ticket entitled them to transportation from one point to another and little else. They rode on the main deck alongside the animals, cargo and machinery. They had to provide their own bedding, food, and supplies and were not allowed near the cabin area. The unsanitary conditions under which they were forced to travel sometimes led to disease and even to the death of some of the deck passengers. This tin cup and plate were left behind on the main deck after one of our runs. When I look at these, I am reminded of the strength and stamina exhibited by these deck passengers.



No matter who you were or what your passenger status was, one thing everyone on board enjoyed was a little friendly competition between boats. Oh, the **Polar Star** never did any serious racing, but sometimes as we approached a landing with another boat we would both fuel up the engines and see which one could make it to the landing first. The passengers would line the rails of the boat and spectators would fill the levee to watch the boats steam ahead. The boat that arrived first usually benefited by picking up extra passengers and cargo.

Classroom Activity #9

Immigrants still come to the United States. Many of today's immigrants come from Asia and Africa as well as Europe. They come for the same reason that immigrants have always come: to seek a better life for themselves and their children. Now ask students to look at immigration from the following four perspectives

1. Immigrants make our country more culturally and economically vital.

2. The arrival of immigrants and refugees has a harmful impact on a region's underclass.

3. Immigrants are a threat to our national unity.

4. We should accept new arrivals because we are a nation of immigrants.



Racing steamboats was not a common practice. For one thing, racing ate into the boat's profits. It required a lot of extra wood to fuel up the furnaces. It was also dangerous and could even mean disaster if the boilers swelled beyond their limits. Of course, even a regular run down the river was not without its share of concerns. The most common problem was running aground due either to a sandbar or low water, which could delay a steamer anywhere from a few hours to a few days. The reverse of that was a flooded river. Floods prohibited us from docking at low landings and played havoc with the course of the river and its channel. Then there were the sawyers and snags. A sawyer was a large waterlogged tree that bobbed up and down in the river. A snag, the most dangerous of the two, was a large tree whose roots had become firmly attached to the river bottom with its top branches near the surface. When you hit a snag, everyone on the boat knew it. The hull would usually shake with such force that items fell from tables and shelves and passengers feared for their lives. It did not always mean losing the boat, but holes could be punched in the hull. Once a boat began to sink, it did not take long. While it was scary for everyone concerned, as long as everyone moved to the top deck, the shallow waters of the western rivers never rose much above the boiler deck. I've included some pictures of boats that met their end on the river.



(Use this photo from the trunk.)



(Use this photo from the trunk.)

Classroom Activity #10

All nineteenth century rivermen knew that the river was a great force not to be taken lightly. Floods, droughts, snags, and ice made navigation a challenge. As early as 1824, the federal government attempted to make navigation easier and safer by sending out the first snag boat intended to clear the channel of these obstacles. Clearing, controlling and changing the river is still an issue today. While many feel the river should cater to human needs, others worry that altering the course of a river disrupts the important ecological balance of our earth. Have students investigate and discuss both sides of the issue.



Did You Know?

The archaeological remains of two nineteenth-century Missouri River steamers, brought down by snags, have been excavated and parts of the boats and their cargoes are now exhibited. Both boats were traveling up the Missouri with passengers and cargo for the newly settled West. The Arabia Steamboat Museum is located in Kansas City, MO and the Steamboat Bertrand exhibit is housed at the Desoto National Wildlife Refuge near Omaha, NE. Both exhibits are an excellent way to learn about steamboats as well as the needs and wants of a growing country.



Did You Know?

Between 1819 and 1897, two hundred and eighty-nine steamboats sank in the Missouri River.

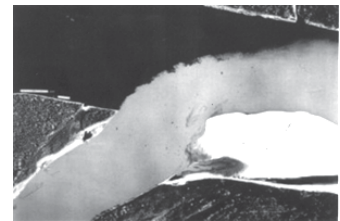


Snags were responsible for the loss of hundreds of boats over the years. Boats were also lost due to collisions with bridge piers and with other vessels. And while obstacles in the river were a nuisance and proved to be costly for many, they did not usually mean loss of life. However, it was the fear of fires and boiler explosions which was stuck in the back of everyone's mind.

I hate to say it, but those grand ladies of the river were nothing more than a pile of wood and a bucket of paint. A spark from the furnace or a lamp or a carelessly tossed cigar could send a boat up in flames in a matter of minutes. But at least with a fire you had some opportunity to escape. Boiler explosions came without warning. When I was on the river there was not yet a foolproof system for measuring boiler water levels or steam pressure. One miscalculation could lead to a fatal disaster. A "burst up," as it was called, sent searing pressure, scalding water, and debris through the air. It put every passenger and crew member in danger, but for the deck passengers and deck hands, a boiler explosion was almost surely fatal. Those that were not killed immediately usually suffered from concussions and severe burns.

Classroom Activity #11

The Missouri and Mississippi are two distinct rivers. The Missouri River is nicknamed "The Muddy Missouri." The name Mississippi is an Indian word meaning "Father of Waters," and sometimes it is referred to as the "Mighty Mississippi." Locate the photo to your right in the trunk. Have students analyze the image then have them investigate these two rivers and determine if their nicknames are accurate.



(Use this photo from the trunk.)



Did You Know?

In April of 1865, the owner of the steamboat *Sultana* contracted with the government to use her as a passenger boat to take homebound Union soldiers north to St. Louis. She was rated to carry 376 passengers. For economic reasons, her captain decided to load as many as possible aboard for a total of 1,886 passengers. In the pre-dawn hours of April 27, 1865, just a few miles upriver from Memphis, three of her boilers exploded. She burned to the waterline and sank. At least 1,547 of the returning soldiers were lost. It is still regarded as the greatest maritime disaster of all time, killing more people than the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912.



Did You Know?

Following the Great Fire of 1849, an ordinance was set in place that ensured all future St. Louis buildings be constructed of brick, iron, and other non-flammable materials.

*It was a boiler explosion that caused the great St. Louis fire in 1849. It was at the height of the goldrush and overlander traffic when the packet **White Cloud** exploded while moored at St. Louis. It was late at night and the levee was filled with boats moored three deep for a mile up and down the wharf. All in all, the fire destroyed 23 other steamers and 15 square blocks of downtown. They tell me it was a ghastly sight.*

*One of the worst explosions I remember was in 1858, when the **Pennsylvania** blew four of her boilers. About 200 of the 450 passengers were lost, including crew member Henry Clemens, the brother of Samuel Clemens, the great writer. The steamers **Diana**, **Imperial**, and **Frisbee** came to the aid of the **Pennsylvania** by picking up as many passengers as they could find in the water and taking them ashore.*

Classroom Activity #12

The year 1849 looked promising for the growing city of St. Louis. Many residents had grown rich from the fur trade, commerce on the Mississippi River and the outfitting of westward travelers. With the discovery of gold in California, St. Louis's population swelled as eastern hopefuls readied themselves for the trip West. Unfortunately, the number of people was more than the city was able to accommodate. As a result, a deadly cholera epidemic took the lives of almost 5,000 people. Have students research cholera and address the following questions:

- What is cholera?
- How is it spread?
- In what other nineteenth century context was cholera a problem?
- After the epidemic ran its course, what actions did they take to ensure it would not happen again?
- Is cholera still a concern today? Why? Where?





For as dangerous and uncertain as steamboating was, I would never trade in my days on the river. Even your Grandma Blossom was taken with the river. Sometimes between runs, we would be held up in St. Louis for a few days, in which case we offered day excursions to the local folks. It was a good way for the company to earn a little money while we were in dock. Your grandma would join us when she could.



She would pack everything for the day in her carpetbag. Many of her personal belongings are still in there. Just like any lady of the day she was never without her fan and gloves. The book Leaves of Grass was one of her favorites and a popular one of the day. She spent many an hour sitting on the deck enjoying Whitman's poetry.



Did You Know?

America's much loved showboats were never true steamboats. The majority had no engine or paddlewheels and were pushed or towed from port to port by other vessels and then tied up at the shore for the duration of the shows' run.

Classroom Activity #13

Locate the CD entitled *Here Comes the Showboat*. The featured sounds are those of the engines, bells, whistles, paddle wheel and steam calliope. The steam calliope did not become popular until the late nineteenth century, during the era of excursion steamboating. Choose some of the selections to play for your students.



Classroom Activity #14

Walt Whitman was a rebel in his own time. He believed people were innately good and only society had led them down the wrong path. He believed life should be celebrated while the rest of society believed in cautious formality. Share with students the first three lines of Whitman's poem "Song of Myself." Ask students to share their impressions of Whitman's words. Celebrate goodness in your classroom.

1. Have students list the qualities they like about themselves and share them with the larger group.
2. Create a "Celebrate Goodness" display in your classroom. For one week, ask students to read the newspaper and pull out only those stories which focus on the goodness of people.

*The river was good to me. In six years I went from mud clerk to chief clerk to part owner of not only the **Polar Star** but also the **Hiawatha**, another Missouri packet. Even though steamboating could be a risky business, what with river obstacles, fires and explosions, a steamboat owner could usually see a profit within 20 weeks. That's because steamboats were an efficient way to transport freight and people at a low cost.*

In 1860, I decided to get out of the business for several reasons. By then I knew it was only a short time before the country was going to be torn apart over the issue of slavery. I knew the war would disrupt river travel. As it turned out, there were many battles fought along the rivers and many working steamboats were fired upon. It was the bloodiest of times in our nation's history. After the war, the glory days of steamboating did return, but only for a short while. As the railroads inched ever farther west, steamboat travel took a back seat. Trains were faster, more efficient and they were not restricted to the course of a river.

Classroom Activity #15

Find this photo in the trunk. How did the construction of the Eads Bridge contribute to the end of steamboat travel?



Classroom Activity #16

Today, ports and riverways still provide an efficient and economic way to move goods. According to the National Waterways Alliance (www.waterways.org) approximately 2.3 billion tons of domestic and foreign products are transported on our rivers. Have students investigate what kind of products can be found moving along the rivers.

*It's been forty-eight years since I set foot on the **Polar Star**, but sometimes it seems like just yesterday. It was a great life for a young man who was curious about the world and who was not afraid of a little adventure. It was a glorious time. Now we can only wonder what this new century will hold. Some are convinced that we will see man flying through the air before it is over. While the future is full of excitement and wonder, I hope you will use these items, and the story they tell, to appreciate and preserve your past.*

*With all my love,
Grandpa Blossom*



Did You Know?

The Eads Bridge was completed in 1874 as a railroad bridge. It was one of the many factors which led to the end of St. Louis' glorious steamboat era. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964.



PARKS: PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE



Did You Know?

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson approved legislation creating the National Park Service to preserve and protect nature and the environment. When students are older, they can volunteer in national parks and help take care of these special places.

Classroom Activity #17

Service learning provides experiential context for social studies. It also helps prepare students to become active, responsible citizens. Have your students contact a national park nearby or find one on the Internet at www.nps.gov to explore ways they can help park rangers make a difference in their community. Also, copy the Careers in National Parks and the Career Search on page 19. In groups or individually, have your students complete the Careers Search looking for the job titles.

Illinois & Michigan Canal, completed in 1848, connected the Great Lakes with the Mississippi watershed along a long standing Indian portage route.
www.nps.gov/ilmi

Mississippi National River & Recreation Area acknowledges the important contributions the river has made to the ecology, culture, politics and economy of the North American continent.
www.nps.gov/miss

To learn more about the importance of national parks, view *Conviction of the Heart* and *The Challenge of Yellowstone* video found in the trunk.

Missouri National Recreational River preserves two stretches of water that still exhibit the river's dynamic character in its islands, bars, chutes, and snags.
www.nps.gov/mnrr

Ohio and Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor celebrates the canal that enabled shipping between Lake Erie and the Ohio River and vaulted Ohio into commercial prominence in the early 1830s.
www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas

The future of American's National Parks lies with the young people of today. As future voters, they will have a voice in their government. As future members of the work force, they may find themselves drawn to the opportunities and challenges of a National Park Service Career.

How would you describe this job?

What skills and/or training are needed to do this job?

Why would a job like this be necessary in a National Park?

Using the National Park maps, find specific parks where you may find people doing these jobs.

pilot
police
secretary
scuba diver

[illegible]

What is the one job that you would enjoy doing the most? How does what you are learning in school help prepare you for this job? What character traits would help you in these jobs?





CHARACTER COUNTS



Did You Know?

The press coverage of the Civil War is considered the dawn of the modern era of the media. During the war, the media used its power to shape the way the nation viewed the war as well as to tinker with the political arena.

On April 9, 1865, a sense of relief swept the country, for the Civil War at last was ended. The loss and destruction caused by the war would not soon be forgotten, but at least the fighting was over. Thousands of Union soldiers, many of which were recently released prisoners of war, were eager to return to their homes in the North and West. To transport war-weary soldiers, the government offered special fees to shipping companies for every Union soldier they carried north on the Mississippi, which brings us to the fateful story of the steamer *Sultana*.

On April 21, 1865, the *Sultana*, a 17-ton steamship with a capacity to carry a few hundred passengers, loaded close to 2,500 soldiers aboard and headed north for Cairo, Illinois. For three days the steamer followed its course. On April 24, just a few miles north of Memphis her boilers exploded. There were no boats or life jackets. It is estimated 1,500 people died in the disaster with countless others severely injured.

At the time the great *Sultana* disaster received relatively little attention. The events of April 24th were obscured by a host of other national happenings which took place in April 1865: the surrender of General Lee (April 9th), the assassination of President Lincoln (April 14th) and the manhunt and capture of John Wilkes Booth (ending April 26th). Despite the fact that the *Sultana* remains this country's worst maritime disaster, few history books mention the event.

The story of the *Sultana* provides an excellent framework for exploring the human character. Use the questions below to stimulate a discussion among students.

What character traits would you use to describe the following people?

- Captain of the *Sultana*, J.C. Mason
- the soldiers aboard the *Sultana*
- the family members of the soldiers
- the survivors of the *Sultana* disaster

In light of the events of April 1865, why do you think the *Sultana* disaster received such little attention?

Why do those who report and record "history" value certain events or stories more than others? Does this still happen in today's coverage of local, national, and world events? Explore the issues.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Now that your students have experienced life as a river man, use the following resources to learn more about St. Louis history, Westward Expansion, and national parks.

INTERNET

Jefferson National Expansion Memorial

<http://www.nps.gov/jeff>

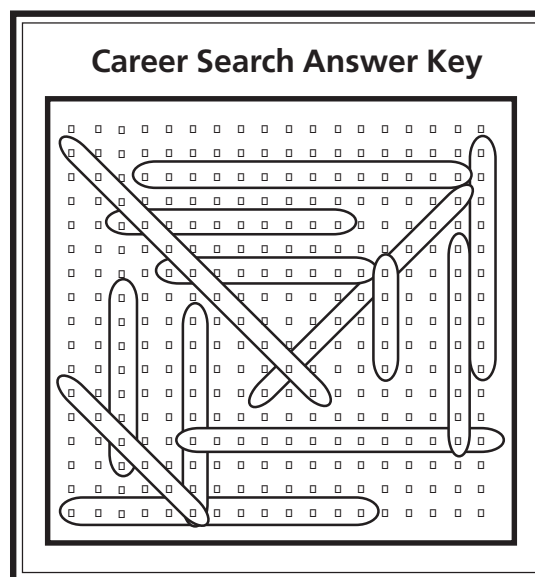
National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov>

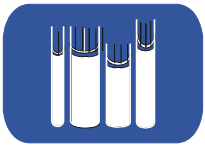
VIDEOTAPES

These films are loaned at no charge by calling our reservationist at (314) 655-1700.

- *Charles Russell – An American Artist* (grades 4-12)
- *Conviction of the Heart/The Challenge of Yellowstone* (grades K-12)
- *The Gateway Arch and The Old Courthouse* (grades K-4)
- *Gateway to the West* (grades 4-12)
- *Lewis and Clark: Great Journey West* (grades K-12)
- *Lost But Found Safe and Sound* (grades K-3)
- *Monument to the Dream* (grades 3-12)
- *A Monumental Story: The Gateway Arch & The Old Courthouse* (grades K-4)
- *Touring the Gateway Arch* (grades 5-12)



(Copy)



READING LIST



Grades K-3

Arrigo, Joseph. *Steamboats on the River Coloring Book*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 1997

Esbaum, Jill. *Ste E E E Eamboat A-Comin*. New York, New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2004.

Scarry, Richard. *Richard Scarry's Great Steamboat Mystery*. New York, New York: Random House, 1975.

Wright, Catherine. *Steamboat Annie and the Thousand Pound Catfish*. Daly City, CA: Philomel Books, 1901.

Grades 4-6

Cobblestone Magazine. *The World of Mark Twain*. Peterborough, New Hampshire: Cobblestone Publishing, May 1984.

Cobblestone Magazine. *The Mississippi River: Father of Waters*. Peterborough, New Hampshire: Cobblestone Publishing, March 1990.

Harness, Cheryl. *Mark Twain and the Queen of the Mississippi*. New York, New York: Simon & Schuster Books, 1998.

Holling, Clancy Holling. *Minn of the Mississippi*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951.

McCall, Edith. *Mississippi Steamboatman*. New York: Walker and Company, 1986.

Middleton, Pat. *Discover! America's Great River Road*. Stoddard, WI: Heritage Press, 1989.



Grades 7-12

Davis, William. *Portraits of the Riverboats*. San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2001.

Ferris, Ruth. *St. Louis and the Mighty Mississippi in the Steamboat Age: The Collected Writings of Ruth Ferris*. St. Louis, MO: St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, 1993.

Gillespie, Michael. *Come Hell or High Water*. Stodard, WI: Heritage Press, 2001.

Gillespie, Michael. *Wild River, Wooden Boats*. Stodard, WI: Heritage Press, 2000.

American Heritage Junior Library. *Steamboats on the Mississippi*. Mahwah, NJ: Troll Associates, 1962.





APPENDIX

Classroom Activity #5 (Answers)

Mark One = six feet

Mark Twain = twelve feet (two fathoms)

Quarter Twain = thirteen and one-half feet

Half Twain = fifteen feet

Quarter Less Three = sixteen and one-half feet

Mark Three = eighteen feet (three fathoms)

Quarter Three = nineteen and one-half feet

Half Three = twenty-one feet

Quarter Less Four = twenty-two and one-half feet

Mark Four = twenty-four feet (four fathoms)

No Bottom = over twenty-four feet

Classroom Activity #8 - Excerpt from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

About a month after this, one morning, all the servants of the Shelby estate were convened together in the great hall that ran through the house, to hear a few words from their young master.

To the surprise of all, he appeared among them with a bundle of papers in his hand, containing a certificate of freedom to every one on the place, which he read successively, and presented, amid the sobs and tears and shouts of all present.

Many, however, pressed around him, earnestly begging him not to send them away; and, with anxious faces, tendering back their free papers.

"We don't want to be no freer than we are. We's allers had all we wanted. We don't want to leave de ole place, and Mas'r and Missis, and de rest!"

"My good friends," said George, as soon as he could get a silence, "there'll be no need for you to leave me. The place wants as many hands to work it as it did before. We need the same about the house that we did before. But, you are now free men and free women. I shall pay you wages for your work, such as we shall agree on. The advantage is, that in case of my getting in debt, or dying,--things that might happen,--yo cannot now be taken up and sold. I expect to carry on the estate, and to teach you what, perhaps, it will take yo some time to learn,--how to use the rights I give you as free men and women. I expect you to be good, and willing to learn; and I trust in God that I shall be faithful, and willing to teach. And now, my friend, look up, and thank God for the blessing of freedom."

Post-Trunk Activities

1. You have used this Traveling Trunk. Now it is time for your students to revise their original contents list. Are there any other items they wish to include? Why? Have them create their own Traveling Trunk and put on a display in your classroom or your school library.
2. As a class, research your community and then choose objects that represent the lifestyles in your community at the present time. Create a Traveling Trunk on your community. Have students contact other students in a foreign city. Send them your trunk and if possible e-mail them to answer their questions about your community. In addition, ask them to create a traveling trunk on their local community and send it to you. You could then use it for display at your school for events like Cultural Days or display it at your local library.

Enjoy Creating Your Own Traveling Trunks!